

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSIONS

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Several recommendations in this Report carry financial implications. The Review Group considers that Teacher Education is such a vital area within the overall Education policy that it is worth additional investment by the Government. It would not be desirable or reasonable if extra funding to HKIEd is to be at the expense of the other UGC-funded institutions. However, beyond whatever additional Government funding becomes available to HKIEd, the UGC also welcomes private funding or other innovative income sources, and is open to new strategies towards that end.

5.2 It is difficult for the UGC to undertake a full cost impact assessment of the proposals in the Review, as there are many factors at play which are not yet fully known, much less costed or quantified. While the integration option is likely to be more cost-effective in terms of recurrent funding, there would be recurrent costs to support Research postgraduate places. There would also be one-off costs to support: research culture within HKIEd; development costs to be borne by the partner university and the Institute; and possibly costs associated with the location of the institutions.

5.3 In the stand-alone option, the costs of transformation would depend on: which disciplines HKIEd decides to develop; the critical mass needed for any new disciplines to be successful; the build up of the research environment; the one-off costs for HKIEd (if any) associated with the changes; Government's views on whether all the existing HKIEd student numbers must be preserved for Teacher Education supply; and the timing of the changes. Whilst difficult to project, we appreciate that the public and the Government will wish to have some idea of the costs.

5.4 HKIEd will have a first-year-first-degree number of about 490 places by 2011/12 – a small number by university standards (in Hong Kong, LU – our smallest UGC-funded university – currently has about 680 first-year-first-degree places). However, HKIEd has substantial numbers of publicly-funded Postgraduate Diploma in Education and other places.

Overall, its UGC subvention is very roughly double that of LU and of the same order of magnitude as that of HKBU.

5.5 Expansion into a multidisciplinary institution would require more first degree places. Assuming three new discipline areas, with a minimal critical mass of 40 each, this would suggest at least 120 additional first-year-first-degree places every year. 120 first-year-first-degree places would require, at current levels and money prices, about \$76 million per annum at full implementation. At the same time, however, there should be scope, after the broadening, for the reduction or removal of the 'Monotechnic Premium' currently given to HKIEd – which at present is about \$60 million per annum.

5.6 As regards the Research postgraduate level, while HKIEd has asked for a phased increase up to 60 places in about three years' time, we believe that this may be an ambitious target for publicly-funded places. We suggest that a target of 30 Research postgraduate places within three years from obtaining endorsement of their research framework would be appropriate. Thirty Research postgraduate places would cost about \$11 million per annum; and this number would also be needed under the institutional integration model.

5.7 As regards one-off costs, at this stage it is not possible for the UGC to make an estimate, as it depends very much on which way forward is taken. Past experience would tend to indicate that the cost would be at least \$100 million, for either the stand-alone or integration option.

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

5.8 Government has an important role to play in the future development of the Institute, not only in terms of providing financial resources. If the Government accepts the main conclusions of this Report, we suggest that it should consider reviewing some of its policies to facilitate and support HKIEd's future development, and the teaching profession in general.

5.9 HKIEd, like other Teacher Education institutions, is subject to Government's goal of balancing teacher supply with demand. In the past, the Administration set out precise targets for the UGC (and hence Teacher Education institutions) on the number of teachers required in different subject areas and levels, e.g. English language (secondary), physical education (primary), *etc.* In practice this led to big swings in numbers and

levels in every funding period and caused considerable difficulties for HKIEd. In the planning for the 2009-12 academic triennium, while still giving detailed numbers, the Administration signaled that the numbers were only “indicative” targets and could be varied. This provided much needed flexibility to the institutions in fine-tuning, and the UGC in distributing, the exact number of Education places for each subject area in light of actual circumstances. Such an approach is important as it allows more scope for institutions to make strategic planning decisions.

5.10 Given that manpower planning can profoundly affect HKIEd, since all its UGC-funded programmes are currently shaped by manpower planning considerations, the Review Group invites the Government to continue to take a flexible approach towards balancing teacher supply and demand. This will enable HKIEd to make longer-term plans, whether it goes forward as a stand-alone institution or as an institute partnered with an existing university.

Recommendation 4

That Government:

- **approach the institutional development of HKIEd as a matter requiring additional funding, over and above existing levels of funding provided to UGC; and**
- **continue to take a flexible approach in planning the manpower dimension in Teacher Education.**

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

5.11 In this Report, the Review Group has identified proposals that it believes would strengthen HKIEd, enhance the delivery of Teacher Education and promote excellence in the higher education sector of Hong Kong. These proposals, it should also be emphasized, will promote excellence and are in line with world-wide education reforms.

5.12 The Review Group is confident that HKIEd’s management is committed to advancing the Institute and has the vision and capacity to implement far-reaching changes. That being said, the Review Group emphasises that the changes proposed, whether implemented in the context of institutional integration, or as a stand-alone institution, are very challenging and likely to consume the human and financial resources and creative energy of the Institute for several years to come.

5.13 The Review Group sees great potential for HKIEd to advance to a significant new level of achievement and standing. We believe that a monotechnic university (of Education) would set the sights too low, and would not be in the longer term interests of HKIEd or its graduates. Beyond this, such a path would not serve to promote excellence in the higher education sector. HKIEd does not have an appropriate spread of attributes of a university, including multi-disciplinarity, deep research capability and self accrediting status beyond its Teacher Education programmes. Unless it achieves university status through institutional integration, HKIEd would need to demonstrate that it had undergone a significant transformation before seeking re-consideration of its status by taking the stand alone, multidisciplinary option. The Review Group recognises that this transformation is a serious and arduous exercise made more so by the concurrent demands of the implementation of “3+3+4”.

5.14 In considering the challenges and opportunities set out in this Report, the Review Group proposes that HKIEd be provided with the support it may need to examine and explore the options proposed. The Council of HKIEd is encouraged to supplement its own counsel with advice from external experts with experience of institutional change of the types proposed. UGC will endeavour to provide all reasonable support and advice to the HKIEd Council while it develops a planned and coherent approach to its development opportunities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

5.15 By developing into a higher education institution that provides a rich, multidisciplinary academic and research environment for the delivery of Teacher Education, HKIEd will become better able to meet the needs of the Hong Kong community and contribute to the development of its higher education sector.

5.16 The Review Group’s suggestions are made with the student learning experience at the forefront of our deliberations. If the suggestions of this Report are implemented, graduates of HKIEd will have a greater variety of courses to choose from, either at HKIEd itself, or in a programme organized jointly with a partner institution, and be better equipped for tackling real world problems and accessing more career options.

5.17 The output of an active research environment at HKIED will inform undergraduate programmes, and influence policy and curricula in Hong Kong's schools. Proposals included in the Blueprint and the supplementary materials should ensure that research students will work in research teams and will enjoy regular interactions with fellow research students through local and international research networks.

5.18 The Blueprint lays out a vision for the future of HKIED based on changes to the title and direction of the Institute. After evaluating that vision, and engaging with the management of HKIED, the Review Group supports the development of research and research training at the Institute, and proposes the further development of HKIED into a multidisciplinary institution. The Review Group believes that its suggestions will promote excellence in the Hong Kong higher education sector and will provide a strong foundation going forward for HKIED and Teacher Education in Hong Kong. This also will serve the institution well in the event it decides in the future to re-submit itself for consideration for the university title.
